

FREQUENTY ASKED QUESTIONS

November 3, 2020 Election

The City of Santa Clara's General Municipal Election is held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of even numbered years. The date of the next election is November 3, 2020. No person shall be eligible to hold any elective office in the City including Mayor, City Councilmembers, Chief of Police and the City Clerk, unless he or she is a resident and a registered voter in the City of Santa Clara. No person shall be eligible to hold a Council District elective office unless he or she resides in the district. The Mayor, Chief of Police and City Clerk are elected at-large on a non-partisan basis and are elected to a four-year term; Councilmembers are elected by district to a four-year term and may serve no more than two four-year terms. All Councilmembers enjoy the same power and privileges; however, the Mayor presides over Council meetings, signs official documents, and officiates at ceremonies and events. Following each election, the City Council appoints a Vice Mayor who assumes the duties of the Mayor in his or her absence.

What are the Voluntary Expenditure Limits for the November 3, 2020 election?

The City Council set the Voluntary Expenditure limits to \$46,420 based on CPI adjustments for City-wide contests and a separate voluntary expenditure limit for district-based contests to \$25,000 (with future adjustments based on CPI). City Council set the individual campaign contributions based on CPI adjustments to \$630 for candidates who accept the voluntary expenditure limit and \$310 for candidates who do not accept the voluntary expenditure limit. [See Resolution No. 20-8843.](#)

When can I take out nomination papers?

The nomination period runs from July 13 until August 7, 2020. It is highly encouraged to make an appointment to take out nomination papers. If an eligible incumbent has not filed on the last day of the nomination period, the voters shall have until August 12, 2020 to nominate candidates other than the person who was the incumbent.

Is there anything I can do before the nomination period opens?

Before a candidate raises any money a Form 501 (Candidate Intention Statement) must be filed with the City Clerk's office.

Is there a fee to pay when I file my nomination papers?

Yes, there is a fee to pay if you choose to file a candidate statement. However, this fee is determined by the Registrar of Voters office, not the City, and the amount is an estimate and varies with each election.

When do Vote by Mail Ballots go out?

Vote by Mail ballots will begin going out the week of October 5, 2020. Vote-by-mail ballots must be postmarked on or before November 3, 2020 in order to count in the November election. Vote-by-mail ballots may also be dropped off at the City Clerk's office between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. If you have any questions about your absentee ballot or are not currently an absentee voter and would like to be one, visit: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Pages/Registrar-of-Voters.aspx>

What if I change my mind about being a candidate after I have filed my nomination papers?

You may withdraw your candidacy any time prior to the close of the nomination period (August 7, 2020). If you choose to withdraw after that date, your name will still appear on the ballot.

When officeholders or candidates receive contributions of \$2,000 or more, are they required to have a committee?

Yes. An officeholder or candidate who receives contributions (including loans) that total \$2,000 or more in a calendar year must file a Form 410 (Statement of Organization).

Can you serve as your own Treasurer?

Yes. State law allows you to serve as your own treasurer, as long as this is designated on the Form 410.

Why is there so much paperwork involved in running for office?

State law requires that you file the appropriate materials to ensure that you are fully disclosing all information pertinent to your candidacy. The purpose of the requirements is to ensure a transparent, fair and democratic electoral process.

Where can I get more information?

The City Clerk's office is responsible for overseeing the City's General Municipal Election. The phone number is (408) 615-2220.